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Subject: Farm Bill 2007 Official Comments - 12/28/2005 12:15 PM CST
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Question1:

Question2:

Question3:

Question4: COMMENTS ON 2007 FARM BILL

N.C. DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

WILLIAM G. ROSS JR., SECRETARY

DECEMBER 22, 2005

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input and comments on the 2007 farm bill. We recognize the farm bill will address farm prices and income programs; however, we strongly feel it should adequately address the natural resource functions, namely soil and water, and the overall stewardship of our natural resources. As such our comments will be focused towards the conservation provisions of the farm bill.

The passage of the 1986 farm bill, continuing through the 2002 farm bill, established new programs and raised conservation to a level of awareness and participation not heretofore attained. Programs such as CRP, EQIP, WHIP, WRP, CSP have allowed farmers and landowners with different agricultural enterprises and viewpoints to participate in the conservation programs authorized by the farm bill. As such recommend the following:

- The reauthorization and funding of the conservation provisions of the 2002 farm bill.
- Consider the grouping and consolidation of the existing portfolio of programs. For example maybe three groupings consisting of an (1) an easement program, (2) a cost share program, and (3) a reward program. This could lead to simplification of rules and better coordination in program management.
- Implement the conservation provisions of the farm bill with technical assistance funds through the Commodity Credit Corporation or funds through individual program accounts. In other words, conservation provisions authorized and mandated by the farm bill should provide a funding mechanism for technical assistance, and not depend on the NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance Program.
- The farm bill should recognize the overall importance of technical assistance. Cost share and financial assistance will offset the initial cost to the land owner, but it is the technical assistance provided by trained experts using state of the art technology that is the key to establishing long lasting conservation practices on private workings lands.
- In addressing natural resource needs, we would encourage that all natural resources be addressed in the farm bill, including soil, water, air, and wildlife. A comprehensive program will better help us address the total natural resource concerns.
- Have the farm bill address land uses other than cropland, i.e.,

grassland, woodland, and grazing lands.

- While not directly a conservation issue, we would encourage the farm bill to address the renewable fuels issue. The use of bio-diesel and biomass has the opportunity to play a large role in energy production and use both on and off farms.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the 2007 farm bill. Our nations private working lands provide our citizens at home and others throughout the world with and abundance of food and fiber. Our continued ability to do so directly depends on how well we manage and take care of our natural resources, namely soil and water. The conservation provisions of the farm bill not only help those farmers who apply them, but also play a key role in the health, well-being, and overall stewardship of our natural resources.

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